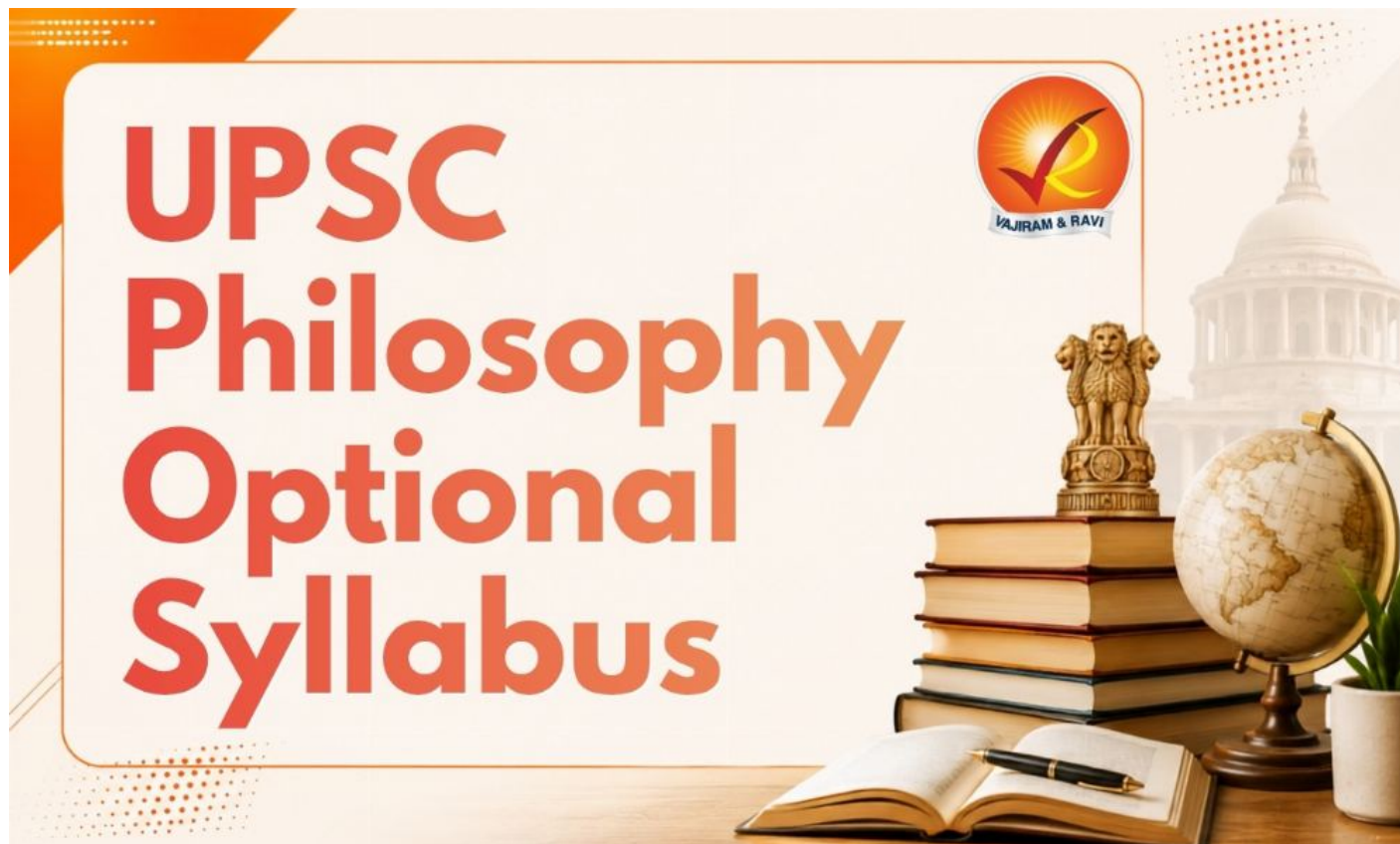


UPSC Philosophy Syllabus 2026 for Optional Paper 1 and 2, PDF

August 1, 2026 • vajiramandravi.com



The **UPSC Philosophy Optional Syllabus** is designed to assess aspirants' understanding of various philosophical concepts, theories, and thinkers. If you have a genuine interest in exploring fundamental questions about existence, knowledge, morality, and the nature of reality, Philosophy Optional could be a great fit. It's a subject that allows you to delve deep into abstract concepts and engage in thought-provoking discussions. The UPSC Philosophy Syllabus aims to evaluate your critical thinking, analytical abilities, and depth of philosophical knowledge.

UPSC Philosophy Syllabus

Choosing Philosophy as an optional subject for the UPSC Civil Services Mains Exam can be a unique and intellectually rewarding choice. Philosophy cultivates strong critical thinking and analytical skills. It teaches you to evaluate arguments, dissect complex ideas, and develop logical reasoning, which becomes an asset not just in the **UPSC Mains** Exam but also in your personal and professional life.

[UPSC Philosophy Optional Course](#)

The **UPSC Philosophy syllabus covers a wide range of topics, from Western and Indian philosophical traditions to ethics, political philosophy, metaphysics, and more.** This diversity allows aspirants to choose areas of personal interest and specialisation.

The Philosophy optional paper consists of two parts: Paper I and Paper II. Here's an introduction to the UPSC Philosophy optional syllabus of both papers in detail.

UPSC Philosophy Syllabus 2026 for Paper 1

UPSC Philosophy Optional Paper-1 Syllabus can be divided in two parts- Western Philosophy and Indian Philosophy.

History and Problems of Philosophy:	
Western Philosophy	• Plato and Aristotle: Ideas; Substance; Form and Matter; Causation; Actuality and Potentiality. • Rationalism (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz): Cartesian Method and Certain Knowledge; Substance; God; Mind-Body Dualism; Determinism and Freedom. • Empiricism (Locke, Berkeley, Hume): Theory of Knowledge; Substance and Qualities; Self and God; Scepticism. • Kant: Possibility of Synthetic a priori Judgments; Space and Time; Categories; Ideas of Reason; Antinomies; Critique of Proofs for the Existence of God. • Hegel: Dialectical Method; Absolute Idealism. • Moore, Russell and Early Wittgenstein: Defence of Common Sense; Refutation of Idealism; Logical Atomism; Logical Constructions; Incomplete Symbols; Picture Theory of Meaning; Saying and Showing. • Logical Positivism: Verification Theory of Meaning; Rejection of Metaphysics; Linguistic Theory of Necessary Propositions. • Later Wittgenstein: Meaning and Use; Language-games; Critique of Private Language. • Phenomenology (Husserl): Method; Theory of Essences; Avoidance of Psychologism. • Existentialism (Kierkegaard, Sarte, Heidegger): Existence and Essence; Choice, Responsibility and Authentic Existence; Being-in-the-world and Temporality. • Quine and Strawson: Critique of Empiricism; Theory of Basic Particulars and Persons.

Indian Philosophy	• Carvaka: Theory of Knowledge; Rejection of Transcendent Entities. • Jainism: Theory of Reality; Saptabhanginaya; Bondage and Liberation. • Schools of Buddhism: Pratityasamutpada; Ksanikavada, Nairatmyavada. • Nyaya—Vaiesesika : Theory of Categories; Theory of Appearance; Theory of Pramana; Self, Liberation; God; Proofs for the Existence of God; Theory of Causation; Atomistic Theory of Creation. • Samkhya; Prakrit; Purusa; Causation; Liberation. • Yoga; Citta; Cittavrtti; Klesas; Samadhi; Kaivalya. • Mimamsa: Theory of Knowledge. • Schools of Vedanta: Brahman; Isvara; Atman; Jiva; Jagat; Maya; Avida; Adhyasa; Moksa; Aprthaksiddhi; Pancavidhabheda. • Aurobindo: Evolution, Involution; Integral Yoga.
------------------------------	---

UPSC Philosophy Syllabus for Paper 2

UPSC Philosophy Optional Paper-2 Syllabus can be divided into Socio- Political Philosophy and Philosophy of Religion.

Socio-Political Philosophy:	• Social and Political ideals: Equality, Justice, Liberty. • Sovereignty: Austin, Bodin, Laski, Kautilya. • Individual and State: Rights; Duties and Accountability. • Forms of Government: Monarchy; Theocracy and Democracy. • Political Ideologies: Anarchism, Marxism and Socialism. • Humanism; Secularism; Multiculturalism. • Crime and Punishment: Corruption, Mass Violence, Genocide, Capital Punishment. • Development and Social Progress. • Gender Discrimination: Female Foeticide, Land and Property Rights; Empowerment. • Caste Discrimination: Gandhi and Ambedkar.
--	--

Philosophy of Religion:	• Notions of God: Attributes; Relation to Man and the World. (Indian and Western). • Proofs for the Existence of God and their Critique (Indian and Western). • Problem of Evil. • Soul: Immortality; Rebirth and Liberation. • Reason, Revelation, and Faith. • Religious Experience: Nature and Object (Indian and Western). • Religion without God. • Religion and Morality. • Religious Pluralism and the Problem of Absolute Truth. • Nature of Religious Language: Analogical and Symbolic; Cognitivist and Non-cognitive.
--------------------------------	---

UPSC Philosophy Syllabus PDF

Here's the updated [UPSC Philosophy Syllabus PDF](#) for UPSC CSE Exam 2024.

UPSC Philosophy Syllabus 2026 Preparation Strategy

Here are some preparation tips for the UPSC Philosophy Syllabus that students can incorporate in their timetable:

- **Western and Indian Philosophy:** Both these sections will have 2 compulsory questions in Paper 1. Indian philosophy can be covered using "Introduction to Indian Philosophy" by Satish Chandra Chatterjee, while "A Critical History of Western Philosophy" by Yakub Masih is recommended for Western philosophy.
- **Social-Political and Religious Philosophy:** These topics form the core of Paper 2. Candidates can read magazines like The Hindu to cover these areas comprehensively.
- **Answer Writing Practice:** After preparing the topics, candidates should practice answer writing. Writing notes will also aid in revision.
- **Enrol in a Test Series:** Joining a UPSC Revision Test Series will help candidates gauge their preparation level and identify areas that need more focus.
- **Note-taking:** Given the vast UPSC Philosophy Optional Syllabus, it is crucial for candidates to keep notes of all important concepts, timelines, and definitions.

Other Related Posts of UPSC 2027	
UPSC Syllabus	UPSC Exam Pattern
UPSC Age Limit	IAS Salary
UPSC Exam Date 2026	UPSC Calendar
UPSC Prelims 2027	UPSC Mains 2026
UPSC Mains Syllabus	UPSC Interview

UPSC Prelims Result	UPSC Mains Result
UPSC Final Result	UPSC Cut Off
UPSC CSAT Syllabus	UPSC Books
UPSC Admit Card	UPSC Previous Year Papers
UPSC Answer Key	IAS vs IPS
UPSC GS Course	UPSC Mains Test Series 2027
UPSC Mentorship Program 2027	UPSC 2 Year Course

Books to Study for UPSC Philosophy Syllabus

The skills developed in studying **UPSC Philosophy Books** are transferable to various aspects of life. These skills are relevant not only for exams but also for decision-making, problem-solving, and effective communication.

UPSC Philosophy Optional Paper I Books

- W. T. Stace: A Critical History of Greek Philosophy (Plato and Aristotle).
- Copleston: A History of Philosophy (Relevant Chapters from volume I, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX & XI).
- Anthony Kenny: A New History of Western Philosophy. OUP Oxford.
- Datta & Chatterjee: An Introduction to Indian Philosophy. Rupa Publishing.
- C. D. Sharma: A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy. MLBD.
- Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy.

UPSC Philosophy Optional Paper II Books

- John Hick: Philosophy of Religion.
- Michael B. Wilkinson: Philosophy of Religion: An Introduction.
- O. P. Gauba: Social & Political Philosophy.
- Political Theory, An Introduction. Edited By Rajeev Bhargava & Ashok Acharya.
- Oxford Dictionary of Politics.

UPSC Philosophy Optional Syllabus, when studied thoroughly and critically, has the potential to yield good scores. The subjectivity involved in evaluating philosophical answers can work to your advantage if you present well-structured and reasoned arguments. By studying Philosophy Optional syllabus, you develop a deeper understanding of human nature, societal values, and ethical dilemmas. This can be an asset not only in exams but also in your personal and professional life. Philosophy is a subject that encourages lifelong learning and personal growth. It equips you with the tools to ponder complex questions and continue exploring philosophical ideas beyond the exam.

Other Related UPSC Optional Syllabus		
UPSC Commerce Optional Syllabus	UPSC Geography Optional Syllabus	UPSC Geology Optional Syllabus
UPSC History Optional Syllabus	UPSC Law Optional Syllabus	UPSC Maths Optional Syllabus
UPSC Medical Science Optional Syllabus	UPSC Philosophy Optional Syllabus	UPSC Physics Optional Syllabus
UPSC PSIR Optional Syllabus	UPSC Psychology Optional Syllabus	UPSC Sociology Optional Syllabus
UPSC Zoology Optional Syllabus	UPSC Economics Optional Syllabus	UPSC Agriculture Optional Syllabus
UPSC Anthropology Optional Syllabus	UPSC Botany Optional Syllabus	UPSC Chemistry Optional Syllabus
UPSC Civil Engineering Optional Syllabus	UPSC Management Optional Syllabus	UPSC Mechanical Engineering Optional Syllabus
UPSC Public Administration Optional Syllabus	UPSC Statistics Optional Syllabus	UPSC Electrical Engineering Optional Syllabus
UPSC Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Science Optional Syllabus		

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/upsc-exam/upsc-philosophy-syllabus/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.